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ABSTRACT

This paper examines two fundamental and related issues in the preparation of educational administrators in developing nations, and particularly in the Commonwealth Caribbean. These two issues are educational administration's relationship to regional development and its relationship to the unequal distribution of power. The first section of the paper questions conventional definitions of development, including the notion that only nonindustrialized countries should be classified as "developing." The second section describes regional training programs for educational administrators that have been carried out in the Caribbean by international organizations. These organizations include the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNESCO's Caribbean Network of Education Innovation for Development, and the United States Agency for International Development (the latter two working in collaboration with each other and the University of the West Indies). The third section of the paper discusses the sociopolitical environment in which educational administrators in the Caribbean have had to operate. It is concluded that these administrators need to recognize clearly that education and politics do mix and that they must strive to build up their political skills if they are serious about increasing the contribution of education to development. (PGD)

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SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE PREPARATION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS IN DEVELOPING AREAS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CARIBBEAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the fundamental and related sociological issues of development and power as they relate to the preparation of educational administrators in the so-called Developing Areas. Special attention is paid to the case of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Conventional definitions of develoment are treated as problematic. It is argued that in order to promote meaningful development, actual and potential educational administrators in the Commonwealth Caribbean and other newly-independent countries must reject conventional definitions of development as well as develop political skills in addition to the planning and other technical expertise which they are presently acquiring.

Governments in the so-called "Developing Countries" are increasingly coming to believe in the desirability of preparation or training for administrators, including educational administrators. They have been receiving assistance from international organizations such as UNESCO, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the University Council for Educational Administration, and the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration, in the training of actual and potential administrators in their countries. The big question is what meaning is to be attached to these preparation or training programmes.

This paper limits itself to an examination of two fundamental and related issues in the preparation of educational administrators in the so-called Developing Countries of the Commonwealth, especially the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. The two issues are educational administration and regional development, and educational administration and the unequal distribution of power. The first section of the paper questions conventional definitions of development, including the widely-held notion that only the non-industrialized countries should be classified as "Developing". The second section describes regional training programmes for educational administrators which have been carried out in the Commonwealth Caribbean by international organizations with the backing of the regional governments. The third section provides an insight into the socio-political environment in which educational administrators in the countries under study have had to operate. It is concluded that educational administrators in the countries in question need to come to an explicit recognition of the fact that education and politics do mix, and must strive to build up their political skills if they are serious about increasing the contribution of education to development.

The Meaning of Development

Those who are responsible for the preparation of educational administrators would claim that their aim is to promote "development". The same claim would be made by the administrators themselves. But development is a highly controversial concept.

The practice of using a single, convenient, aggregative yardstick, per capita income, to measure development is widespread. On the criterion of per capita income, the industrialized countries of the White North are usually classified as Developed and the Third World countries as Developing. The fact of the matter is that social problems and political upheavals have been afflicting countries with rising per capita incomes, as well as countries with stagnant economies. There are at least three central questions which must be asked if one is to come to a meaningful understanding of the development process:

> "The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have,

> it would be strange to call the result 'development', even if per capita income doubled."
>
> (Seers, 1973:7)

The countries of the Third World do not have a monopoly on poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Even the United States, which is considered by some to be the most "Developed" country in the World, has its fair share of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. This paper rejects, therefore, any notion that development is a terminal process, a process which comes to a screaming halt once a country becomes like those of the industralized White North. The term "Developing Areas" is patently ethnocentric, as is revealed in the following excerpt from Adams and Bjork (1969:1):

> "When American servicemen overseas dream of an end to conflict and their return home, they usually envision the United States as a true land of milk and honey. It is a place where one can order a thick milk shake, where one can easily get a car and the gas to run it, where meat on the table is a possibility at nearly every meal, where clothes can be easily bought and easily cleaned and where sheets on the bed are the norm for nearly everyone. In other words, they consider America superior to the areas in which they are fighting or have fought (such as southern Europe, North Africa, Korea, Vietnam) mainly because its material wealth vastly outdistances most of the lands with which they have come in contact. The GIs have coined derogatory terms for the poor Asians, the poor North Africans and others. But wealthy Americans of Asian parentage are exempt from this ignoble nomenclature because they have gained much of the material wherewithal that seems to remove the stigma.
>
> In more academic language, we have come to call most of these countries and peoples falling outside Europe, North America, and Australia simply 'underdeveloped' or, more hopefully, 'developing'.
>
> (Emphasis added)

It is clearly necessary to ask the question: Which kind of development and hence which kind of education? (Lema and Marquez, 1978:295-300). Concerned people have been asking this question in industrialized and non-industrialized countries alike, even though they have been in a minority. The once unquestioned technocratic view of the relationship between development and education, and other approaches that tended to concentrate on the contribution of education to economic growth - for example the relationship between education and gross national product - have been gradually losing ground (ibid.:297). If it is accepted that development ought to imply, at the very least, the reduction of poverty, unemployment, and the myriad forms of inequality, then it should be recognized that development is ultimately a

problem of power. Any steps which are taken to achieve what is considered in this essay to be the three key objectives of meaningful development - that is, measures which seek to improve the lot of all human beings - will be resisted by those who have a vested interest in the perpetuation of the status quo.

These crucial issues of development and the unequal distribution of power help us to understand why, in the literature on administrator preparation, opinion has been divided on a number of matters. These matters include:

1. the substance of preparation programmes, particularly the issue of the importance of social science content;

2. values in administrative practice, and the relevance of the humanities in the study of administration;

3. "training in common" for administrators from different institutional settings;

4. the relationship between theory and practice;

5. the extent to which there should be differentiated preparation programmes for a varied clientele with varied career goals; and

6. whether it is defensible to maintain a distinction between pre-service and in-service activities in view of the changing characteristics of students and the conditions under which they study educational administration. (Miklos 1983:153-172)

At the root of the ongoing debate in the literature is the issue of whose interests are served by administrator preparation programmes and in what ways. (ibid.:172).

Regional Efforts at Administrator Preparation

Against the background of the remarks made in the preceding section, a description will now be given of some activities which have been carried out in the area of training of educational administrators in the ex-colonies of the Commonwealth. The focus of attention is the Commonwealth Caribbean. It must be emphasized that while activities which have been carried out at the national level may be of interest, the primary concern in this essay is with what has been happening at the regional level. This involves, essentially, a description of the work done by the Commonwealth Secretariat, and of a collaborative effort by UNESCO's Caribbean Network of Education Innovation for Development (CARNEID), the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Activities of the Commonwealth Secretariat

Three important things happened at the Fifth Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education which was held in Canberra in 1971. Firstly, that Conference was the first Commonwealth Conference to discuss specifically the subject of educational administration. Secondly, that conference expressed support for the training of professional and administrative personnel in education. Thirdly, it gave the Commonwealth Secretariat a clearing house role in the training of professional and administrative personnel in education.

It is not necessary to provide here all the details of the training activities which were carried out by the Commonwealth Secretariat in the wake of the Canberra Conference. It will suffice to highlight a number of activities, for the Commonwealth Secretariat has published a report on the various regional workshops, planning meetings, and regional training courses which it carried out during 1973-1979 (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1981). The first thing which would be mentioned is that three regional workshops were held: in Sierra Leone (1973), in Guyana (1974), and in Malaysia (1975). Secondly, by the time of the Malaysia workshop, the Commonwealth Ministers of Education had reached agreement on

(a) the importance of regular Commonwealth in-service meetings for educational administrators, and

(b) giving consideration to the establishment of regional and inter-regional centres for training educational administrators and supervisors.

Thridly, a planning meeting which was held in Nairobi (Kenya) in 1975 drew on the experience gained in the three regional workshops, and provided the framework for three regional training courses. Those courses were held in Nairobi (1977), in Fiji (1978), and in Barbados (1979). The work which was done in the three regional training courses was welcomed by the Commonwealth Conference of Ministers of Education which was held in Colombo in 1980.

The Barbados course was for the Commonwealth Caribbean, and is therefore of special interest. Its organization was influenced by the experience gained by the organizers during the preceding regional training courses, especially the Nairobi course:

> "Seen, in part, as a pilot programme, the Nairobi course indicated strengths and weaknesses in the course structure, and in the practical arrangements, to which subsequent courses could respond. For example, the course highlighted the difficulties of meeting the needs of a heterogeneous group of principals, advisers, district education officers, and inspectors in a consistently appropriate way both in the conceptual structure of the course and in its practical expression. At the same

> time the value of a professional interchange of views among officers occupying different positions in national administrative structures was readily apparent. It was recognized also that attachments to educational and administrative institutions could play a prominent training role, strengthening an appreciation of concepts and processes examined theoretically. Similarly, it became clear that a variety of training techniques should be utilized, associated with training materials which could be of use in the participants' home countries.
>
> In the light of this experience and the second course held in Fiji for the Commonwealth Pacific in 1978, the Commonwealth Secretariat organized that third regional course maintaining the principle that existing training institutions are the most effective mechanism through which courses of the type recommended by the Nairobi meeting may be provided."
>
> (Commonwealth Secretariat,1981:1)

The Barbados course was hosted by the Government of Barbados in association with the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill. It lasted for nine weeks, and was attended by 18 participants from 11 Commonwealth Caribbean countries. The participants were a heterogeneous group: school principals, a principal of a teacher training college, education officers or supervisors whose roles included the supervision of teachers as well as in-service and curriculum development, an assistant secretary to a Ministry of Education, and a chief education officer.

The syllabus for the course for this varied group was prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat in the light of the previous two regional courses, and was modified to meet the specific "needs" of the participants. The outline syllabus had two main units:

1. the examination of education in its social and economic context and the implications which flow from this for understanding different levels of the management cycle, and

2. a concentration on supervision in relation to specific task areas.

Course materials included country papers, case studies, and simulation.

According to the Commonwealth Secretariat, the responses of the participants to the evaluation questionnaire which was administered in the last week of the course revealed

(a) that all but one of the participants considered the course to have heightened their appreciation

of the management process;

(b) that all but one of the participants felt that an understanding of the concepts to which they had been exposed would improve their effectiveness as educational administrators on their return home, although their ability to implement training activities would depend upon their role and influence within their national system; and

(c) that there was agreement that the course assisted in the identification of training needs and provided useful ideas on the planning and organization of training courses.

(Commonwealth Secretariat 1981:105)

CARNEID/UWI/USAID Project

The other regional training effort which should be mentioned is the collaborative one by CARNEID, the UWI, the USAID. To date, this effort has taken the form of three regional workshops on educational planning and administration. It may be of interest to note that participants in the workshop included persons from non-English speaking Caribbean countries, such as Cuba and Haiti, since CARNEID's operation covers the entire Caribbean.

A report on the three workshops has been published by CARNEID (1985). According to that report, the workshops have aimed at assisting Ministries of Education in improving the competence of their Senior Education Specialists in Educational Planning and Administration. The first workshop was for Chief Education Officers and Directors of Education. It was held in St. Lucia in April, 1983. The issues which were given special emphasis were: educational planning in the context of national planning, central issues in educational planning and administration, case studies in educational planning and administration, and the elaboration of national action plans in respect of UNESCO's "Major Project" (for Latin America and the Caribbean).

The second workshop was for Education Officers and Principals of educational institutions. It was held in Barbados in December 1983. It emphasized the following topics: planning and management of educational costs, planning and development of human resources, evaluation in educational planning and management, the use of statistics in educational planning and management, and the roles and functions of educational personnel.

The third workshop was held in Nassau, the Bahamas, in October 1984. It was a follow-up workshop to the one which was held in Barbados for Education Officers and Principals. The topics covered were: the importance of diagnosis in educational planning, diagnostic methods, analysis and data collection, indicators of the educational system, trends and projects, evaluation of an educational project, and problems and difficulties in the administration of in-service teacher education.

The Socio-Political Environment

The fact that actual and potential educational administrators in the Commonwealth Caribbean and the other ex-colonies of the Commonwealth are being helped to build up their technical skills, including their planning skills, is not to be decried. The issue is, however, whether they are able to use those skills in a meaningful way, that is, to promote development as defined in this essay. The answer appears to be in the negative, at least for the time being.

The defining feature of the ex-colonies of the Commonwealth is that fundamental cleavages based on race and class have continued to exist in these societies. In the specific case of the Commonwealth Caribbean, the expansion and reform of the educational systems of the region in the post-colonial era, i.e., over the last two decades, have helped to bring about a measure of upward social mobility for a few individuals from among the historically subordinate Black and Indian groups. Such expansion and reform have had the effect of "creating a new class of privileged nationals", even though the objective of the expansion and reform has officially been to help remedy the injustices of the colonial era. (Carrington, 1978:89). The absorption by the historically dominant white group of a limited number of individuals from the historically subordinate groups appears to have done more to reinforce the class structure than to undermine it:

> "Around the region, black faces adorn boards of directors, inhabit the ministerial offices, and man all reaches of the civil service. The administrative and political structures of the region have become almost completely Africanized and Indianized. New elites have burgeoned.
>
> In Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago particularly, the rise to power and privilege of the local elites has been the most visible and most flaunted. Huge, garish houses have gone up in exclusive neighbourhoods, testifying cogently to their owners' affluence, if not to their taste.
>
> Mercedes sports and touring cars bump and jaunce their way through the potholes. The materialistic wives and children of the new elite, to whom social concern is as foreign as their color TV sets, shop in Miami, finger their way through boutiques, and display a disdain for their less fortunate fellow citizens of which any nineteenth century British aristocrat would have been proud."
>
> (Farrell, 1983:4)

To round out the picture provided above, it is useful to examine the pattern of adjustment to sharing of power by the political elites in the post-colonial Commonwealth Caribbean. It has been usefully pointed by Paget and Stone

(1983:xii, xiii) that while there have been variations in this pattern of adjustment, there have been at least two common factors. The first common factor is a tendency toward almost life-and-death party competition, a tendency which has resulted in violence and repressive legislation. The second common factor is the development and growth over time of a system of interests between the economic and the political elites:

> "This system of interests is rooted in the needs of the economic elites for the cooperation and protection of the state, and in the needs of the political elites for the investments and the personal contributions of the economic elites. The claims of this system of interests have led to the political elites to reverse or discard many of the promises of the period of nationalist struggle and have resulted in a corresponding decrease in the capacity of the masses to influence decision-making. This decrease is often compensated for by an increased reliance on patronage and the cultivation of clientelistic ties that developed earlier but were eclipsed by the more ideologically oriented politics of the decolonization period. As a result, the tendency toward machine-type politics and corruption has increased in the post-colonial period, posing yet another challenge to the democratic self-image of the Caribbean State.
>
> (Paget and Stone, 1983:xiii)

The political pattern described above is not confined to the Commonwealth Caribbean. It is also found in most other newly independent countries of the Commonwealth. In discussing the subject of "politicians, bureaucrats, and decision-making" in newly-independent countries, Horowitz (1972: 403-408) has stressed that

1. the new leaders insist on having all policies originate with the party in power so as to ensure control, and

2. a major point of conflict between the politicians and the bureaucrats in these countries is the question of personnel recruitment for administrative posts.

On the question of recruitment for administrative posts, Horowitz has highlighted the fact that considerations of patronage tend to be prominent:

> "Whether trained personnel are available or not, political leaders find themselves under overwhelming pressure to fill administrative posts through patronage. Party followers, competent or not, demand some share in the spoils of power as a reward

> for allegiance. Furthermore, the new government, none too sure of its own stability, operates in a paranoid environment in which distribution of patronage is seen as vital precaution against opposition from disgruntled followers.
>
> (Horowitz, 1972:409)

Conclusion

This paper began by treating the concepts of development and of "Developing Countries as problematic. It was argued that development ought to imply at least the reduction of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, and that this implies that all countries are, in a very real sense, developing. It was also pointed out that the crucial related issues of development and power help to provide an understanding of why at least six sociological issues are frequently discussed in the literature on administrator preparation. A description was then given of the activities which the Commonwealth Secretariat has been carrying out in the area of the preparation of educational administrators in the ex-colonies of the Commonwealth, and reference was made to the collaborative regional training effort of CARNEID, the UWI, and USAID, in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The point was made that the building up of technical skills be actual and potential educational administrators is commendable, but that the prevailing socio-political environment militates against the effective use of these skills by educational administrators in the cause of development as defined in this essay.

The question which presents itself, then, is what can be done in preparation programmes to help educational administrators contribute to the substantial reduction and eventual elimination of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Such administrators need to develop their planning skills, and progress is apparently already being made in this respect. But, and perhaps even more importantly, they also have to develop political skills, since development is, in the final analysis, a problem of power.

In respect of the development of political skills, actual and potential educational administrators can draw on the experience of their counterparts in industrialized countries such as the United States. It is a moot point whether educational administrators in the United States are committed to the reduction of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. However, in the United States, school superintendents and principals, for instance, have been developing their planning and political skills with a view to commanding respect and to exercising influence in matters educational (Hess, 1983:236-244). They have been able to do this because, inter alia, they

> (a) have developed sophisticated data and methods of analysis which have enabled them to gain a crucial advantage over other groups with interests in education, and

> (b) have had technical staffs with the know-how to enable them to justify organizational changes, obtain favourable collective bargaining agreements, and raise additional monies.
>
> (ibid.:244)

Time will tell what will become of educational administrators and of preparation programmes for this group in the Commonwealth Caribbean and other newly independent countries of the Commonwealth. One thing seems to be predictable. As the newly-independent countries of the Commonwealth move into the twenty-first century, educational administrators in these countries will be forced to keep abreast of the time in terms of the development of technical skills. Whether they will continue to use these skills primarily to serve the cause of the rich and powerful is an open question.

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